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ABSTRACT

This edition of the "Virginia English Bulletin" is devoted primarily to articles about multiple-elective programs in high school English classes. These articles include: (1) "Multiple Electives in the English Curriculum" by R. Baird Shuman; (2) "Creative Dramatics: A Natural for the Multiple Electives Program" by Charles R. Duke; (3) "Spotsylvania Experiments with New Courses" by Donna Kolb; (4) "Canadian School Experiments with New Courses" by James Satterwaite; (5) "From Pole to Pole: The Teaching of World Literature as a Multiple Elective" by Robert T. Robertson; and (6) "English and Social Studies--The Academic Odd Couple" by Bernard S. Miller. A bibliography on high school phase-elective English programs prepared in August 1970 by NCTE/ERIC is also included. (Author/DI)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

Multiple Electives in the English Curriculum 3
R. BAIRD SHUMAN

CREATIVE DRAMATICS: A Natural for the Multiple Electives Program 9
CHARLES R. DUKE

Spotsylvania Experiments with New Courses 13
DONNA KOLB

Canadian School Experiments with New Courses 15
JAMES SATTERWAITE

FROM POLE TO POLE: The Teaching of World Literature as a Multiple Elective 18
ROBERT T. ROBERTSON

English and Social Studies—The Odd Couple 23
BERNARD S. MILLER

Bibliography for Phase—Elective English Programs 33

Articles are invited and should be submitted to the editor. Manuscripts should be typewritten and double-spaced. When possible, footnoted material should be incorporated within the article. Deadlines for copy are October 15 and February 15.

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FOCUS: MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

Mutual enthusiasm, shared by both teachers and students, has developed in the many schools providing multiple elective programs in English. The more traditional courses—creative writing, drama, speech, journalism, the novel, modern literature, and poetry—continue to be popular. The newer offerings, however, including elective courses in semantics, satire and parody, the literature of American minority groups, the literature of ecology and environment, science fiction, and world literature are gaining in popularity.

The nine-week or six-week nongraded phase elective organized by theme is one of the more recent approaches for handling English teaching. Themes concerning the human condition, the American experience, the undiscovered individual, the inner struggle, new frontiers, the independent spirit, the search for values, the search for personal freedom, and the youth scene, as well as fear, loneliness, abandonment, conflict, and others are increasing in number and popularity.

In most schools language and composition skills are correlated with the literature. In some schools the courses are correlated also with social studies and the other humanities.

These programs not only spark student interest but also give creative staff members many opportunities to initiate ideas and update curriculum.

A special bibliography prepared by NCTE/ERIC will be found on page 33 of this issue of the BULLETIN.

Multiple Electives and the English Curriculum

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MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

The very size and shape of the English curriculum have been sufficient through the years to boggle the minds of many able curriculum planners. In conventional circumstances, the high school English teacher is daily exposed to four or five classes of students, each class ranging in size from 25 to 35. The exposure typically will be for a semester (in the neighborhood of 18 weeks) or a year (about 36 weeks). In the course of this time the curriculum usually includes the so-called tripod of English—literature, grammar, and composition—as well as smaller doses of such curricular step-children as drama, stagecraft, journalism, creative writing, technical writing, speech, oral interpretation, or whatever else the teacher is capable of presenting.

Who is the teacher? In two cases out of three, the teacher is a woman; therefore, we shall refer to the teacher as *she* throughout the course of this article. Her median age would be about thirty, and she typically would have had about five years of teaching experience. There is a 50-50 chance that she is married and, on a national average, an almost equal chance that she did not have an academic major in English at college. There is less than a ten percent chance that she has had any formal training in composition beyond her own freshman English course in college.

There is less than a ten percent chance that she has had more than one course in grammar. If she has majored in English, she has generally been in a program emphasizing literature, and she has had four courses in nineteenth or twentieth century literature for every one in the literature of earlier periods. She had also had about three courses in American literature to every course in British literature. Unless she has been through college within the past five years, she has not even a nodding acquaintance with Black literature, Chicano literature, American Indian literature, Oriental literature, Slavic literature, African literature, or recent literary critical theory. She has had little if any training in speech, reading, or library techniques.

All of this does not mean that the typical English teacher is hopelessly deficient. She has remarkable strengths and has generally adapted unbelievably well to a situation which does not permit her to specialize and which constantly calls upon her to teach in areas for which she has had little or no formal preparation.

This phenomenon has for too long been accepted by English teachers who either (1) work amazingly long hours just to keep up with their students, especially when they have three or four preparations, (2) ignore the curriculum guide and teach those things which they are prepared to teach, or (3) prepare for one or two classes a day and let the rest do busy work. No teacher, no matter how gifted and well trained, can work at a peak level of efficiency if she is constantly expected to do the bulk of her work in areas outside those in which she has expertise. In such cases, enormous amounts of energy go into a pursuit from which only minimal results can be expected, and the resultant frustration leads many teachers away from the profession.

Obviously, as we build out schools of tomorrow, we must consider on the one hand ideal educational outcomes, and on the other the limitations within which these outcomes must needs be achieved. Alvin Toffler asserts that most education is looking backward rather than forward, that "Even today it retains throwback elements from pre-industrial society." He continues, "Yet the whole idea of assembling masses of students (raw material) to be processed by teachers (workers) into a centrally located school (factory) was a stroke of industrial genius. The whole administrative hierarchy of education, as it grew up, followed the model of industrial bureaucracy."[1] The schools, in short, were providing society with the sorts of trained human products that an emerging industrial society could best use.

Schools of tomorrow, as we move toward the sort of super-industrialism which will require less human time and effort for the production of the goods which the people of the world require, will necessarily have to shift gears to the extent of encouraging human creativity, from which all real long-term progress, industrial or otherwise, stems, and training people how to handle the many options and the rapid change which they will face during an average lifetime. Students will increasingly need to master the

technological knowledge which will keep a super-industrial society viable while, at the same time, developing the sort of value system which will make it possible for them to cope with the dangers inherent in super-industrialism. Whole peoples will have carefully to weigh such crucial issues as, for example, national pride versus world citizenship. In a thermonuclear age, there is little room for errors in judgment and little room for super-patriotism.

The English curriculum, if it uses the best resources available to it, can do much to provide a bridge between people and to bring about in students a degree of self-actualization which will make them better people. But it cannot do this without considerable realignment which must grow out of a critical assessment of the virtues and liabilities of the profession.

Probably the most valuable asset of the profession is a human one. Students and teachers working together toward the achievement of significant goals are quintessential to educational progress. One can say categorically that everyone wants to learn. If students rebel against learning, perhaps we are trying to make them learn things which they can see no purpose in learning. The most recalcitrant student in school probably has learned non-academic skills which would surprise his frustrated mentors. He learns eagerly and without much goading the things which count for him. Often literature, grammar, and composition are not among these.

If real learning is to take place, it must take place within a more realistic setting than the average school provides. Neil Postman has recently admonished that those who are in school are possibly making a grave mistake by being there. "I want to cloud your mind with the thought that schools, prisons, and lunatic asylums are quite similar institutions,"[2] he declares and goes on to draw numerous parallels among the three institutions. Much formal education in the long-term future will probably take place outside schools as we know them today. Education will parallel life.

However, most communities are not ready to move the whole way in this direction yet, and for the time schools must operate essentially within many existing frameworks, modifying them gradually, always with an eye toward eventual radical change in education. Certainly if compulsory school attendance laws are relaxed, as it is thought in some quarters they will be,[3] communities will probably move toward supporting on-the-job training and collateral education much more fully than most do now.

In the meanwhile, educational change continually must work toward taking advantage of all of the flexibility which is coming to be available in scheduling, must devise ways to use personnel in the most effective and efficient ways, and must be undertaken in view of what predictably might happen on the broad educational scene in the decades ahead. It is probable that school districts will be increasingly pinched for funds. It is also probable that, in order to make optimum use of the school plant, many districts will go over to year-around operation, with students taking vacations or leaves at various times during the year. It is also likely that

schools will have many more drop-ins in the decades ahead—people who come by for one or two courses now and then and who hold full time jobs in the community. Curricular flexibility will be the key to meeting these situations.

In English, we must face squarely some existing facts which will determine how effective our operation will be. To begin with, as school districts find expenses increasing and sources of income diminishing, it is unlikely that English teachers will be able to look forward to having smaller class loads than most of them currently have. It is likely, however, that they will have more assistance in the form of teacher aides, that they will share responsibility through team teaching, and that a modified Lancastrian system will result in considerable experimentation with the use of student tutors.[4] Also, some elements of the English curriculum, particularly in areas such as usage, spelling, mechanics, and some grammar, will be packaged, as they already have been in many situations, and students will work through LAPs at their own pace rather than attend class regularly for instruction. The responsibility for learning will be almost completely upon the student in such instances.

Another fact that we must face is that most English teachers—regardless of whether this is desirable or not—will continue to be essentially teachers of literature. If such is the case, then it is merely a matter of efficiency to have a literature-centered English curriculum. Grammar as most of us know it probably should not be taught by English teachers. One uses his native language as a reflex, an automatic response, in most situations. For the average student, little is to be gained from his studying how his native tongue is put together. No demonstrable evidence exists to suggest that the study of the grammar of one's native tongue helps the student to communicate more effectively in speaking or writing. When one is learning a second language, there is reason, perhaps, for him to learn about the structure of that language, and the foreign language teacher should offer most of the grammatical instruction in high school.

This is not to imply that the student should not have any courses which focus on language. It undoubtedly is helpful for some students to know something about levels of usage, the mechanics of expression, semantics, dialectology, and lexicography. It is valuable for them to develop a sensitivity to style which they will probably do from a combination of reading and writing. But it is patently absurd for students to study the so-called "rules of English grammar" for every year they are in school. There is just not that much to teach the average student about English grammar and he, quite reasonably, refuses to learn something which (1) has little demonstrable value to him and which (2) is taught almost every year with very little change or progress.

It is my view that in the light of the situations which exist in the profession and which are likely to continue to exist in the next two or three decades, English departments would be well advised to institute flexible English programs which stress multiple electives. They should proceed

by (1) assessing the range of talents within the department, (2) inviting students to provide input for the process of curriculum planning, (3) reviewing cogent research in the field, and (4) inviting business, industry, and institutions of higher learning to indicate what English training they deem essential at the high school level. With all of this information at hand, the department, working with students, should design a year's program of study consisting of as many mini-courses as the department can comfortably support. These courses would probably range in duration from six to nine weeks.

In order that some seminar type courses might be available, it would probably be necessary to have some large lecture courses in operation during the entire year. Perhaps, for example, a large lecture section might be offered on "Westward Expansion and American Literature." Such a course would probably be team taught by someone in English and someone in social studies with occasional presentations from instructors of art and music. The student taking this course would come to see the broad range of westward expansion. He might simultaneously or during the next elective period be taking a discussion course, limited to an enrollment of fifteen or twenty students, on the novels of Frank Norris or on the local colorists of the West.

The student would also be expected to complete LAPs on mechanics and usage, proceeding with these independently, but always having some faculty member or qualified aide to whom to turn if he ran into problems which he could not handle alone. He would do written work but would probably receive no formal classroom instruction in composition. Rather a writing clinic would be available to him. The clinic, staffed by someone extensively trained in writing, along with a staff of aides, would work individually with students who would turn to the clinic as writing problems occurred. Writing would be a part of every course rather than of English courses alone.

If any multiple elective program is to be successful, teachers must be encouraged to develop specialties and students must be involved in the planning and implementation of the program. James D. Raths has found that optimum learning takes place if an activity "gives students a chance to share the planning, the carrying out of a plan, or the results of an activity with others . . . if it requires students to rewrite, rehearse, and polish their initial efforts . . . if it assigns to students active roles in the learning situation rather than passive ones . . [and] if completion of the activity may be accomplished successfully by children of several different levels of ability."[5] In other words, involvement is fundamental to learning.

The discovery method of teaching demands involvement and, particularly in the multiple elective type of program, where [illegible] should be more clearly defined than it is in the conventional semester- or year-long program, students should be encouraged to explore and to expand their knowledge, digging more deeply into the substance of whatever they might be studying than they ever have been encouraged to do before.

Certainly the discovery approach is a feasible one for the small-group courses in a multiple elective program. The discovery method is one in which the teacher is a learner fully as much as the students are for, as Postman and Weingartner note, "It is one of the exciting (and to some teachers frightening) characteristics of 'discovery' teaching that once a question is seriously accepted and the process of inquiry has begun, it is difficult to predict where it will lead."[6] Teacher and students alike are led into new territory, some of it uncharted, and by exploring it together, a community of interests develops.

Some problems exist in multiple elective programs. For one thing, teachers have a class with them for a relatively short length of time and may have the feeling of not getting to know their students so well as they might in a more conventional situation. But this objection seems to be counterbalanced by the fact that students experience a broader range of teachers than is possible in a regular English program. They also have more opportunity to tailor-make their English curriculum than is usually possible. Obviously, some checks are necessary to make sure that the range of their experience in English is not too narrow.[7] From what I have seen, it also appears desirable that some elements of the multiple elective program be limited to eleventh and twelfth graders, since maturity levels vary so drastically among adolescents.

Ideally, I would hope that all English teachers might have had the specialized training in grammar and composition that most of them have had in literature. However, since such is not likely to be the case in the foreseeable future, I feel that a literature—and idea-centered multiple elective program makes very good sense. Such a program, when augmented by a writing clinic and a good programed learning center, will likely achieve results generally better than those achieved in many of the conventional English programs which are in use today.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1970), p. 400.

[2] "Schools, Prisons and Lunatic Asylums or What's a Nice Kid Like You Doing in a Place Like This?" *Outside the Net*, I (Winter, 1970), p. 5.

[3] Harold G. Shane and Owen N. Nelson, "What Will the Schools Becomes?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, LII (June 1970), p. 597.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 596.

[5] "Teaching without Specific Objectives," *Educational Leadership*, XXVIII (April 1971), pp. 714-720, *passim*.

[6] *Linguistics: A Revolution in Teaching* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1966), p. 172.

[7] For more detail see my "The Rotating Unit Approach to the Teaching of Secondary School English," in *Educational Comment: Ideal Designs for English Programs* edited by Howard C. Zimmerman (Toledo, Ohio: University of Toledo Press, 1968), pp. 31-37.

CREATIVE DRAMATICS: A Natural for the Multiple Elective Program

CHARLES R. DUKE
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MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

The tremors sent out in 1966 by the Anglo-American Conference at Dartmouth are still being felt in many areas of the teaching of English. One of these areas is drama. Teachers have traditionally approached drama as merely another genre or perhaps as a part of the usual historical literature survey. But now people like James Moffett and Douglas Barnes are urging that we consider drama from another viewpoint. They are suggesting that drama may provide a focusing element for all we normally teach in the English classroom. In a study called *Drama: What Is Happening?* (NCTE, 1967), James Moffett argues that drama and speech are central to the language curriculum; he offers the following as a rationale:

> Drama is the most accessible form of literature for young and uneducated people. It is made up of action; and the verbal action is of a sort we practice all the time. A kindergarten child or an older illiterate can soliloquize and converse, verbalize to himself and vocalize to others. No written symbols are required. (p. 3)

What Moffett envisions is a program which draws upon all facets of drama as a medium for instruction. One of the keystones to such an approach is the use of creative dramatics. We must realize, though, that when we speak of creative dramatics we are not talking of the usual school productions for the public nor the intensive reading and analyzing of Shakespeare and other playwrights. We are, instead, referring to a form of drama which is completely student-centered. It includes all forms of improvised drama created and played by students with spontaneous dialogue and action. It is an art for students and a group experience that allows every person to express himself as he works and plays with others.

Of course, the immediate reaction of some authorities has been predictable. "Creative dramatics? Why, that's nothing more than fooling around!" With that puritanical streak which runs through many of us, we may find it difficult initially to believe that something which is fun and pleasant can also be valuable as a learning experience within the classroom. Yet, we have to make that claim for creative dramatics.

Let's consider for a moment what its values really are. First, we find that work in creative drama can develop those characteristics which are essential for the processes of discussion, evaluation, and group inter-acting. Second, the promotion of creative expression of all kinds is another goal which can be realized through active use of creative dramatic techniques. There is also the opportunity to exercise and channel emotions which

might otherwise spill out and cause disruption to the school and damage to the child.

What makes creative dramatics attractive for a multiple elective program, though, is that little formal preparation or equipment are required. It is a course that can draw on all segments of the school population—the more mixed the better—and it is a course which should have considerable carry-over into other programs, including the regular offerings in drama.

There are various approaches to the teaching of creative drama. The order of developing various aspects of it is not too important, but individuals who are just beginning usually find it profitable to spend time on a sequence of activities to insure some kind of continuity. The first of these activities would probably involve work with movement and the senses. High school students tend to be quite inhibited and need to feel that there is no threat to free expression of emotion and action. To develop such an atmosphere, the teacher will want to work with the class as a whole or in groups. There should be no emphasis upon audience; everyone should be a participant. Attempts to show emotional reactions, to develop different ways of moving through space—all are designed to give the student a heightened awareness of himself and of his ability to express what he feels. Once there seems to be some progress in this area, the students are ready for pantomime.

It is a common misconception that pantomime is simply a way of doing without words. Actually, pantomime is more like thinking overheard; it begins and ends before words have been formed. Feeling is extremely important to effective pantomime. There is a striking difference between the pantomime of a boy woodenly doing the supper dishes and that of the boy who is washing dishes while the ball team waits impatiently under the kitchen window, his mother having threatened to withdraw his allowance if the dishes are not washed. Here we have the tension and conflict which make for successful drama. Pantomime also illustrates that drama develops from within; the pantomimist who does a good job is the one who through the powers of movement is able to communicate his ideas and inner emotions to others. It is also this use of movement which will encourage the shy student to volunteer for participation; not having to rely on direct verbalization, he is free to concentrate on using his body as a means of communication. Frequently from this kind of an approach the nonverbal student will find reason to speak and will be stimulated to increase his language fluency.

Success in pantomime leads to the next aspect of creative dramatics—improvisation. This part of the art goes back to the very source of drama, for it was through improvisation that the Dionysian ritual took the first step which led to Greek tragedy.

Improvisation is often confused with pantomime; the two are closely related but there are some important differences. First, improvisation is unplanned and unpredictable. Often the only structure offered is that of an opening situation. Ideally, of course, there should be no structure but

simply raw ideas which are developed into form as the players work with them. Improvisation also leads to dialogue. Usually as pantomime becomes more efficient, students find themselves spontaneously developing dialogue which then moves them into improvisation and suggests a number of activities which can be developed in this aspect. One of these is obviously the scripted play; students can improvise, evaluate, play and play again until they have a product which they like. Then the product may be committed to paper and used by other groups.

As improvisation progresses, the teacher will find that students move in and out of it easily; there will be periods of discussion and evaluation which will slide smoothly into improvisation and then out again. The student is learning all the time about group processes and inter-action; he is exposed to group criticism and development. Frequently the teacher will find that his main function is merely to act as a resource person once the program gets underway.

Other aspects of creative drama can be introduced as the need or time allows; for instance, role playing, socio-drama, and reality theater are all possibilities, but the teacher will probably find that there is more than enough material to keep his students occupied just within the province of pantomime and improvisation.

An elective in creative drama could be run for as short or long a period as seemed advisable. The following is a sample course description set up for an eight-week period.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Creative Dramatics is a course which calls for active participation in numerous dramatic activities which will help to develop the student's awareness of surroundings, people and events as well as to introduce him to basic dramatic techniques.

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Creative Dramatics is open to any student in the high school who is interested in developing his powers of expression.

OBJECTIVES

1. To promote expression of all kinds, movement and speech complementing and reinforcing each other
2. To gain an understanding of the need for clarity in communication
3. To develop through dramatic play the characteristics helpful in the processes of discussing, responding, evaluating, and inter-acting
4. To exercise and channel emotions
5. To become familiar with basic dramatic techniques

CHIEF EMPHASES

The primary focus of the course will be upon student involvement in a variety of creative dramatic activities. The teacher's role will be that of guide and occasional catalyst.

MATERIALS

It will not be necessary to obtain texts for the course; the teacher may wish to have at hand collections of poetry, short stories and possibly short plays to draw upon for minimal situations, but the majority of the material should be created by the students.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: An exploration of the senses, emotions and movement
Week 2: An introduction to pantomime
Week 3: Continued use of pantomime with emphasis upon advanced characterization
Week 4: Introduction to improvisation
Week 5: Student initiated improvisation
Week 6: Development of improvisational scripts
Weeks 7 & 8: Advanced improvisation, pantomime, and script writing

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Progressive activity—one student begins an activity which is not named; others join him and through their actions indicate who they are and what they are doing; this activity can also be used as a basis for improvisational dialogue.
2. Use evaluation—discuss positively the various activities done; following discussions, re-play the activities, perhaps switching roles and then evaluate again.
3. Use poems and short stories as starters for improvisations.
   A. Read the first part of a story and let the students improvise the remainder; variation on this is to outline a story situation and let students create the story.
   B. Use a poem such as "My Last Duchess"; at first the poem might be read while actors mime the scene; later it could be a free improvisation.
   C. Use a poem or story that calls for a narrator as well as actors; this is a good way to introduce reader's theater.
4. Develop opportunities for student scripts:
   A. Have students construct short *duologues*—these are two character scenes with fixed setting, obvious conflict, and playable in five minutes or less; later these may become triadic or even more complex.
   B. Have the duologues acted within groups; let the group members polish them through the play—evaluation-re-play pattern; then the resulting scripts might be exchanged among groups for continued evaluation and performance. The result of such activity could be an anthology of short plays suitable for future classes.
5. Occasional use of very short films which can be shown more than once within a class period; these films should emphasize pantomime or improvisation preferably; it might be possible to find films of Oriental theater such as the Kabuki Theater which would offer some fine opportunities for discussion and evaluation.
6. Watch performances of such groups as The Good Humor Company, The Ace Trucking Company, and others on television; evaluate such performances in class and use them as starters for class activity.
7. Use some form of short warm-up drill for each meeting. The mirror exercise is useful for this and once students are familiar with it, they can proceed on their own. Basically the exercise consists of pairs of students; within each pair, one is the initiator (I), the other the reflector (R); I mimes certain actions while R reflects them as accurately as possible; roles should be changed frequently.
8. Contact local theater people and have them come in to the class and talk with students about the emotional and communicative aspects of drama.

(Continued on page 22)

Spotsylvania School Experiments with New Courses

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MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

Spotsylvania Senior High School has a student body of approximately 850. About one-fourth of the graduates will go on to college. The English Department is composed of six full-time teachers and three part-time. The English program is an experimental one based on semester-length elective units which make extensive use of rental paperback books in addition to traditional texts which are available to all students. The program is the result of an attempt to individualize instruction.

Literature, language, and composition are correlated in each unit, and all genres are represented in each unit, if possible. Each unit includes an overview, a list of objectives, and suggested materials. Activities are to be added this year. Units fall under the following four categories: sophomore, sophomore recommended for the college-bound, junior and senior, and junior and senior recommended for the college-bound. Students make unit choices in the spring and are scheduled for both semesters of the succeeding year during the summer. Offerings are as follows:

SOPHOMORE UNITS

NON-COLLEGE-BOUND	Minority Groups Sports and Cars Horror, Mystery, and Suspense Science Fiction Man and Nature
COLLEGE-BOUND	Composition and the Research Paper *(required first semester)* Alienation Greek Myths and Legends— World Literature I

JUNIOR-SENIOR UNITS

NON-COLLEGE-BOUND	The Devil Westward Ho! Love Makes the World Go 'Round The Impossible Dream Short Story
COLLEGE-BOUND	History and Styles of Drama Shakespeare—*(will not be offered in 72-73)* Major British and American Authors World Literature II *(will not be offered in 72-73)* Writing Workshop *(offered in 72-73)*

SAMPLE UNIT—THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Overview

The class will study various types of literature which comment on the impossible dreams of man. Students, both individually and in groups, will respond in writing and oral presentation to the works read. From the reading, we will explore the nature of man's dream through consideration of such questions as:

1. Does every man have a dream? If so, why?
2. What contributes to the creation of a man's dream?
3. What influences the outcome of such dreams, their failure of success?
4. What effect does the outcome have on the individual?

Objectives

Language

1. To recognize the flexibility of language.
2. To communicate appropriately and effectively through language.

Composition

1. To formulate and organize one's ideas.
2. To record one's thoughts in a clear and concise manner.
3. To develop coherence in compositions.
4. To write legibly.

Literature

1. To be aware of the form and structure of various types of literature.
2. To recognize the various purposes of literature.
3. To be aware of various techniques used by authors.
4. To read and respond sensitively.

MATERIALS

Novels: Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men;* Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon;* Buck, *The Good Earth.*

Short Stories: Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon.*

Essays: Stevenson, *El Dorado.*

Biography: Welsh, *Marching To Freedom.*

Song: *Somewhere Over the Rainbow.*

Drama: Wasserman, *Man of La Mancha;* Cowan, *Summertree.*

Myth and Legend: *Diogenes; Jason and the Golden Fleece.*

Poetry: Burns, *To A Mouse;* Russell, *Promise;* Colum, *An Old Woman of the Roads;* Booth, *Ego.*

Canadian School Experiments with New Courses

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MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

With the advent of a partially semestered timetable at Point Grey Secondary School, in Vancouver, the English Department thought the time was opportune to implement some changes within the Grade 11 and 12 English curricula.

In place of the standard Grade 11 and 12 English courses we decided to create a number of shorter courses of one semester's (approximately five months) duration. These courses were introduced at the beginning of the present school year.

In our present program students are required to take three semesters of English in their Grade 11 and 12 years, although they are certainly free to fit in more English if they so choose. One of these courses, composed of a core curriculum, is compulsory for all students. For the other two or more semesters students have a selection of some seven elective areas.

Perhaps some idea of what we are attempting might be better conveyed in a brief outline of each of the courses.

CORE COURSE

We thought that it was necessary that each senior English student be exposed to each of the literary genres somewhere in one of the Grade 11 and 12 courses. We also thought it to be imperative that somewhere in one of the senior years each student receive some formal language study and some help in a variety of written composition situations. Hence our rationale for insisting on a compulsory core curriculum. In this course, as in most of the others, we draw heavily for our resources from the current English 11 and 12 texts. In the core program students and teachers, therefore, are free to draw from such sources as *Man's Search for Values, Human Values in Drama, Theatre Today, A Collection of Shakespeare's Plays, Essays of Today, Story and Structure, Discourse, The Critical Approach,* and *Unit Lessons in Composition.* Core classes will normally study one of *Lord of the Flies, The Loved One* or *I Never Promised You A Rose Garden* in depth.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Creative Writing

In this course, taught by a member of our department who himself has had considerable writing experience, students get a chance to read and to write in a wide variety of literary forms. In addition to writing, classroom activity centers on group readings, discussions of selected poetry and prose and workshop presentations of student work. We have been able to make

extensive use of a number of excellent films such as *Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti, Ladies and Gentlemen: Mr. Leonard Cohen, Morning on the Lievre, Autobiographical: A. M. Klein,* and *Poem.* Also a number of local writers and graduate students in creative writing have visited the class to read from their work. We are working toward establishing a very sizable class library of individual novels, poetry collections and non-fiction prose. At the end of each semester a class magazine is assembled.

Poetry

In this course, rather than emphasizing the writing of poetry, we stress the study of individual works, both traditional and contemporary. Anthologies used include: *Poetry of our Time* (present English 12), *A Selection of English Poetry* (old English 30), *Poems Past and Present* old English 21), *Poems Worth Knowing* (old English 40), *Poetry of Relevance ≠1 and ≠2* (folk songs and poetry), and *Shapings* (a recent anthology of contemporary and traditional work published by The Book Society of Canada).

Elizabethan Literature

Though reference is made to other writers of the period, this year the course has been weighted heavily in favor of Shakespeare. Students are studying five of Shakespeare's plays—*Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Othello* and *The Tempest.* Opportunities certainly exist here for use of movies, television productions and, of course, local theatre productions.

Canadian Literature

This year the course is being taught on a survey basis highlighting Canadian literature from the Colonial Period of Literature written in the 1960s. Some books available for this course are: *The Penguin Book of Canadian Verse, Masks of Fiction* (A.J.M. Smith), *The Loved and the Lost* (Callaghan), *Barometer Rising* and *The Watch That Ends the Night* (MacLennan), *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (Richler), *Swamp Angel* (Wilson), *Sara Binks* (Hiebert) and *The Collected Poems of Earle Birney.* Currently we are investigating a book of Canadian short stories, a collection of play scripts and an anthology of Canadian folk lyrics for inclusion on the course. During the year we have managed to build up a substantial Canadian collection in our library.

Novel and Longer Prose

In this course several longer prose forms are studied intensively. These include: novella—*Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner;* novel—one of *Martian Chronicles, A Separate Peace, Cat's Cradle* or *A Canticle for Leibowitz;* the longer play—either *12 Angry Men or Romanoff and Juliet;* non-fiction—*The Population Bomb;* the prose poem—selections from *The Iliad;* contemporary autobiography—*Coming of Age in Mississippi.* Additional fiction and non-fiction titles are available for extensive reading.

Integrated

Taught in a double block of class time by two teachers (one English and one social studies) and including 60-70 students, this course gives the participants credit for one semester of English and social studies. Through a series of seminars, the presentation of student research asignments, and the participation of many guest speakers on a wide variety of topics, students study a number of contemporary problems from both a social and a literary point of view.

Directed Reading Tutorial For Grade 8 Students

In this program selected Grade 11 and 12 students are given the opportunity to act as tutors to a number of our Grade 8 students who are experiencing reading difficulties. Elsewhere in this issue Rick Cooper, one experiencing reading difficulties. It is one course in our department that readily exhibits tangible gains by both the junior students and their senior tutors.

As we are only part way through the second semester of this new curriculum alignment, it is obviously impossible to evaluate many strengths or weaknesses. At this point, teachers and students appear to have experienced no particular difficulties in adapting to the fact that Grade 11 and 12 students are in one class together. Students appear to enjoy the concentrated five-month 'dose' of English, although several teachers have mentioned that the planning of long-range independent projects has suffered somewhat.

Of one thing we are certain, however. None of the courses we have created was meant to exist forever. If wholesale changes appear necessary, these will be made. As new English teachers join the staff at Point Grey, we shall continue to make use of their various strengths and interests. Already we are agreed that we should add courses in Bible literature and mythology to our elective list next year.

From POLE TO POLE: The Teaching of World Literature as a Multiple Elective

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MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

Multiple electives are increasing in Virginia school curricula and are being used or tried at both the college and high school levels. Teachers are becoming aware that depth treatment of a few delimited areas offers greater challenges and opportunities for learning than linear survey courses which move inexorably from author to author without affording an overview of the total meaning of their sum. The prescribed curriculum in English for Virginia schools and the traditional curriculum in Virginia colleges are also beginning to weaken, and electives are ways of evading their restrictions. One popular source of materials in English elective courses is world literature, often because the challenges and opportunities are greater than in the traditional material. A vast new field of literary materials opens up for the English teacher but most of it is unknown to her and she has to educate herself in it; hence the unit approach allows a foray into, say, African poetry or Indian fiction without having to know the whole of world literature.

The problems in preparing an elective in world literature are three: What is world literature? Why do it? How do I prepare a unit and teach it? World literature is a window on the world through which we can get to know its peoples. This view subsumes an answer to the first question: We teach it because it is good for us to know other peoples through their literature. Both answers are essentially humanistic in the best sense but they differ from the philosophy of world literature as taught at the college level where teachers sometimes treat the text as essentially transparent—as a window through which we see the content which exhibits the peoples of the world—the college courses focus on the window and are interested in the common literary forms used by any selection of works from world literature.

These are the two poles in the teaching of world literature—those of content and those of form. They are the difference between reading and studying literary work, and as such they exist in any literature course. But because the history of world literature is more than twice as long as that of British literature and its geography much greater than that of American literature, the tension between reading and studying is greater in world literature courses and units. The training of the teacher is likely to have been *literary*—the study of universal literary forms—but the interest of the student is wholly *worldly*—a view of other cultures, and there are so many of them, past and present.

The central question, then, is what we mean by world literature, and depending on the answer to that we will know why we want to teach it and how to do so. The position is similar in the study of language: at one

pole the practical utility of learning to write, at the other the theoretical study of all language as linguistics. In world literature teaching the practical pole is cultural—it improves our culture to know others by way of literature (or anthropology or sociology); the theoretical pole is interested in aesthetics—in the "literistics" which characterize all literature, which can be taught only in English classes.

Four different ways of answering the three questions about the teaching world literature are summarized in the outlines given below of courses or units in the subject. They make their appearance in the English classroom in two forms—either incorporated as units into the existing courses or as electives and alternatives to the present curriculum.

I. The first form can be organized by enlarging the material on an English or American writer to include material from world literature, thus creating in effect a small unit on, say, Shakespeare in the context of his literary tradition or the genre of drama. The advantages of this method appear fourfold:

1. The teacher is not responsible for the whole range of world literature and can select the contextual material from her own training and reading.
2. It prepares the student for comparative study at the college level.
3. It can be taught within the present curriculum provided some way is found of disposing of displaced material.
4. It is a more literary and less worldly use of world literature.

Although this method is not exactly a multiple elective it is in effect an elective on the part of the teacher, and since the method has as many permutations as different teachers propose it is certainly multiple in its results. It is most applicable to the survey courses found in grades 11 and 12 and in college sophomore courses.

II. The second form, an elective, can best be illustrated by describing a course taught by Mrs. Jean Dyson of John F. Kennedy High School in Richmond, Virginia. The course is entitled "Power to the People." The "People" were defined by her students as stemming from a polyglot nation. "Why should people of different ethnic groups have to lose their identity in this country?" But Mrs. Dyson's students understood "People" to mean the peoples of the world, represented in an English class by their literatures. From the poetry of twenty-five countries Mrs. Dyson selected work for incorporation into a presentation which used the music of those countries behind the recitation of the poems by members of the class, accompanied by a slide sequence. Mrs. Dyson feels that an overall view as in her unit was preferable to concentration on particular areas in preparing elective units—say, on India or West Africa—for that kind of special treatment could tend toward ethnicism.

The textbook Mrs. Dyson uses is *Man in Literature*, subtitled "Comparative World Studies in Translation." This is a collection of 37 stories, 5 poems and 6 plays, mainly from 29 modern European countries. Only 6 of the 48 selections come from outside Europe—2 from South America,

2 from Japan, 1 from India and 1 from Africa, and this last, curiously enough, is not a translation; the book can scarcely be called "world" literature. It is, however, a useful introduction to much unfamiliar work, and its especial value is the resource book and the eight ancillary anthologies that accompany it, in which the world proportions of literature are better observed.

In the *Teacher's Resource Book* to this series the editors state their objectives. Although the general editor asserts that the book ignores the three approaches to literature generally used in schools—the chronological, the analytic, and the thematic—the grouping of the selections in 14 sections is thematic. The sections are arranged to show the relationships between the individual and society—enjoyment, manipulation, suffering, alienation. One universal or literistic aspect of literature, then, is that its material is likely to deal with these relations.

This definition is essentially humanistic and corresponds to the premise of Mrs. Dyson's elective. Teachers interested in finding out *why* they should teach world literature will find useful the statements in the *Resource Book*. They can ignore the effusions of one editor who claims that world literature is particularly "relevant" because it exhibits "the stuff of life" and " emotion-charged themes'; a much better argument is that of James E. Miller who sees that all literature nourishes the imagination, that it is "a preparation for prevailing," a means of rehumanizing oneself in an increasingly dehumanized and technological world. But why world literature? Because "America has shed her parochialism and . . . lost her innocence," gaining thereby an entry into an awareness of the world as one, of the community of man.

Much of what the editors say was confirmed by Mrs. Dyson's students. The students commented that the United States is very provincial and our ignorance of the rest of the world causes us to make mistakes in dealing with other nations. Large numbers of military personnel and civilian tourists abroad often do not seem in the least affected by their exposure to other cultures, and this is surprising in a nation which was originally polyglot and is not yet homogeneous. It should be observed that America is in an imperial phase and that a successful imperialism depends on an invincible ignorance of other cultures; a missionary succeeds when he is utterly convinced of the superiority of his message to native religions. We are beginning to see this absolute view turning relative in our own day, with a consequent loss of faith in the superiority of the American way of life to all others. In its humanistic aspect, emphasis on the content pole of world literature does perform a useful social function in our society. But is that the sole function of world literature in English classes?

III. A third method is that of independent study. This is easily accomplished by means of the anthologies accompanying *Man in Literature* but it demands thorough training of the teacher as a resource person in world literature, and is likely to be an area or thematic delimitation of the material; the training of the teacher does not mean knowing all world literature but having learned the literistics of all literature.

IV. In contradistinction to the comparative, contextual, humanistic and unit approaches described above, a fourth method is used in some world literature courses at V.P.I. The sophomore three-quarter course is entitled "Survey of World Literature" and deals with European literature up to the Renaissance, with European, British and American literature from the Renaissance to contemporary works, and with Asian and African literatures. A one-quarter junior course is offered in Commonwealth Literature—Australian, Canadian, Indian, African literatures, and others. There is also a senior three-quarter course in Major World Writers—European, Slavic, and Afro-Asian. Although there is some apparent overlapping here, it is caused by the different approaches used—chronological, area, and literistic; in some sections, for example, European literature is treated chronologically, in others a certain geographical area is the subject, and in others a literistic overview is attempted.

This fourth method selects its texts almost at random in the belief that if the approach is literistic it will be able to find its universals of literature in any texts; this of course demands considerable training in theoretics on the part of the teacher so that she can see these universals in any work. The premise of such an approach is structural: literary works are literary and hence timeless rather than topical because of their structures; writers create structures of words (customarily called novels, poems, plays) which outlast them and appear to defy time; the secret of their vitality is not their content but the structuring of that content in literary form. We are thus probing the DNA of the thing we call literature, and our probing will be viable only so long as we take the widest compass of literature as our material—hence world literature is better than British or American for our purposes. The relationship between the long life or classic status of a work and our comparatively short life would be that literature structures (or instructs) our vision of that short life—it is a short cut to seeing chaos as form, as having the meaning of its form; all living attempts to be a structured activity like learning. Indeed, living is learning.

There are only three class activities in such an approach: the student reads the work; the student studies the work by outlining to his satisfaction both the formal and the essential structure, observing the proportions carefully in a diagram; the students and the teacher compare their structures, agree on the facts or statistics of the given literary work, and then discuss the meaning of the structure by comparing it to the structures of other works in order to find the basic pattern which the few texts under consideration seem to obey. Our conclusions about this group of works become hypotheses about the essential nature of literature itself, to be further tested against other groups, and offering a guide to grasping quickly the essential structure of any work the student reads.

This glimpse or grasp of the literistics of literature affords a window on the world—but not of its cultures; rather of the ways the human imagination has worked with its gift of language over the centuries and all over the world. This view of world literature as the matter of all literature obviously proposes that literature as fundamental to understanding the

particular ways in which the language called English has been used in British or American literature, just as linguistics theory underlies an understanding of how English is used in speech and writing. When one answers in this way the question "*What* is world literature?" one obviously has different answers to the *why* and *how* of teaching it from those given above.

One teaches world literature because it is literature, not because it is culture. We live in one world and there is only one literature, although we live in one part of that world and get a largely European education. The structural approach is, of course, only one way of getting to the essentials of literature, and the teacher must always ask herself how fundamental or literistic her elective can be for whatever grade level she is teaching. Nevertheless, the structural approach does have the merit of giving the student a lot to find out for himself and then engaging him in a mutual discovery of how a literary work works as literature.

The literistic approach to the study and teaching of world literature provides the basic training for all English teachers, but it also offers electives which are exciting rather than dutiful responses to a current trend in the English curriculum. What is unresolved is the degree to which fundamental concepts can be used in the English classroom, especially in elective courses.

CREATIVE DRAMATICS

(Continued from page 12)

Creative dramatics, then, offers a multiple approach to learning. It draws upon speech as well as nonverbal aspects of communication. No special equipment, facilities or expertise are needed—only enthusiasm, willingness to experiment, and a desire to increase sensitivity among young people. Undoubtedly there will be false starts and periods of discouragement, for students and teachers at this level often are inhibited. But faith in the creative potential of each individual and the belief that stimulation of that potential is one of the most worthwhile educational activities make creative dramatics a natural choice for inclusion in any English elective program.

English and Social Studies—The Academic Odd Couple

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MULTIPLE ELECTIVES

All of us in the disciplines of English and social studies should become intellectually and emotionally involved and unite to plan interdisciplinary electives. If we fail to touch one another's heart and mind, to share ideas, to understand that both our disciplines have common ancestors and common aspirations, English and social studies can be expected to experience the same fate as our dying cousins, the classics.

We need desperately to tear down the subject curtain that has artificially separated us for too many years. In both subjects we read and discuss man's creative and distinctive efforts, his search for meaning from the enigmas of life, his laws and rituals and myths developed as protection and expression. In both subjects we deal with continuity and change; in both subjects we embrace the humanities, that cluster of attitudes, behavior patterns, and ideas which affirm our participation in mankind.

As humanistic subjects, English and social studies do not aspire to be scientific, to be definitive. You may have read that a team of scientists at Harvard Medical School has isolated the basic chemical unit of heredity, the gene. It is now predicted that in less than twenty-five years, scientists will be able to cure hereditary diseases and change inborn traits by injecting new genes in what is called "genetic engineering." In the news report one of the scientists observed: "The work we have done may have bad consequences over which we have no control."

Unlike the sciences, which concentrate on the "how" of life, our disciplines, as part of the humanities, are primarily concerned with the "why" of life, with the personal, the subjective, the emotional, the spiritual, and the moral. Answers we may tentatively accept today to the problems of living a meaningful life can be completely wrong for another individual, and at another time. If the sciences give options on what we can do, a study of English and social studies should provide us alternatives on what we should do. Because our roots are in the humanities we are more concerned with teaching the right questions than the right answers. We seek to expose a student's intelligence rather than his ignorance. We know that knowledge that is merely accumulated doesn't add up. We see our humanistic disciplines, English and social studies, as a moment in the conscience of man.

Such are our precepts and suppositions. Or are they? All of us are painfully aware that too many of our odd couple colleagues merely masquerade as teachers of the humanities. They are licensed to teach

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Dr. Miller's article appeared in the spring issue of the "Louisiana English Journal." Dr. Miller is a former assistant director of the John Hay Fellows program.*

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English or social studies; they teach like a modern Moses who has received the eternal verities from on high. Each teacher-pronouncement must be copied and memorized as though it was holy writ. Someone has observed that this form of lesson is the easiest way for a teacher to move his notes from his notebook to his student's notebook, without affecting the student's mind. The threat of a failing grade induces most students to study, to regurgitate the expected answers on an examination paper, and to promptly forget and tune out the subject in favor of more exciting aspects of living.

Each year, as students in such classes move from one grade level to the next, they hear the same long-playing record:

> How could you be so stupid? Didn't the teacher last year cover this material on the presidents of the United States? Didn't you learn the difference between a verb and an object?

In the past, the students were too polite, or too cowed, or too wise to reply. But if the teacher could have read what the eyes reflected, they might have learned the answer:

> Yes, dear social studies teacher. We had the presidents last year. We have to learn the presidents, and some years even the vice-presidents in grade three and five and seven and eight and again at eleven or twelve. But to us they are only names, only skeletons, only dead people in textbooks. Why can't you bring them alive in the classroom, make us interested in them as human beings who loved and hated, laughed and felt pain, who expressed doubts as well as beliefs? Perhaps so many of us are refusing to look back, or we look back in anger, because we sense nothing dynamic, nothing relevant in the past, as you teach it, to our world today.
>
> Yes, dear English teacher, we covered the different parts of speech last year. But how dull! Couldn't you at least make it a game, like a detective story where you give us some clues and let us discover the meaning and order of words? Of course we want to know how to read and write, and how to communicate. But in English class I'm only doing penance.

If there subconscious thoughts of today's teenagers seem farfetched, listen to their anti-hero of the 1960's, Holden Caulfield. You will recall that in one of the early chapters of *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden goes to visit his social studies teacher, Old Spenser.

> "I flunked you in history because you knew absolutely nothing."
> "I know that, sir. Boy, I know it. You couldn't help it."
>
> "Absolutely nothing," he said over again. That's something that drives me crazy. When people say something twice that way, after you *admit* it the first time. Then he said it *three* times.

"But absolutely nothing. I doubt very much whether you opened your textbook even once the whole term. Did you? Tell the truth, boy."

"Well, I sort of glanced through it a couple of times," I told him. I didn't want to hurt his feelings. He was mad about history.

"You glanced through it, eh?" he said—very sarcastic. . . . . .

"Your, ah, *exam* paper is over there on top of my chiffonier. On top of the pile. Bring it here, please." . . .

"We studied the Egyptians from November 4th to December 2nd," and said . . . "Would you care to hear what you had to say?"

"No sir, not very much," I said.
He read it anyway though. You can't stop a teacher when they want to do something. They just *do* it.

Later Holden described how he could shoot the bull with his social studies teacher and at the same time think of something else.

> It's funny. You don't have to think too hard when you talk to a teacher. All of a sudden though, he interruped me while I was shooting the bull. He was always interrupting you.

Strange, isn't it, how fiction is sometimes the lie that reveals a greater truth.

Recently the National Council of Teachers of English made a survey of English teachers in schools around the country which had a reputation for excellence. In each of these schools the English teachers were asked to characterize the type of student-teacher relationship which prevailed in their classrooms. Invariably the teacher replied, "democratic." Unfortunately, what the investigators observed from the back of the classroom as the lesson proceeded did not often resemble the procedure stated by the English teacher in the front of the room.

"Teaching," Gilbert Highet observed in his book, *The Art of Teaching*," is not like introducing a chemical reaction; it is much more like painting a picture or making a piece of music, or, on a lower level, like planting a garden or writing a friendly letter. You must throw your *heart* into it; you must realize it cannot all be done by formulas, or you will spoil your work, and your pupils, and yourself."

Unfortunately, Professor Highet's perscription is easier said than followed. All too often we get so enmeshed in the drudgery of school life, with what television critics call the vivid portrayal of the trivial, that we have no energy or desire to do more than reuse tired old lesson plans.

Let us grant that the overwhelming majority of us odd couples, in English and social studies, became teachers for the best rather than the worst reasons. Let us grant that we enjoyed working with young minds and hearts, that we felt pleased to be contributing to the growth of students, that we saw purpose in our discipline as a humanizing force. Why then have so many of us become computers rather than communicators? The solution, I suggest, lies partially in what we choose to teach and partly in how we choose to teach.

Like the legendary blind men examining the elephant, each teacher alone in the classroom sees his objective and interprets the learning process from his frame of reference. Neither the English teacher nor the social studies teacher is either aware or really cares what the students in his room were taught in other classes. Students march Pavlov-fashion through a segmented curriculum, segmented to provide convenient cubicles in which to store the separate fields of knowledge. But the examination of life through the prisms of separate disciplines gives students a fragmented view of civilization. Instead of viewing school learning and school life as a totality, we offer students a jigsaw puzzle of odds and ends and lots of inbetweens and never bother to ask whether the pieces fit together. For most students, they do not. We wonder about the infinite capacity of the student's mind to resist the intrusion of knowledge. But if the knowledge does not hang together, the students see no point in paying attention.

Of course, each discipline has its unique strengths. Each discipline provides special benchmarks which, like a space station, offer a springboard for new explorations. English teachers need to place some stress on syntactical sentencing, on effective ways to communicate, and on spelling. (Only in the English teacher's class do students fail to ask before a test, "Does spelling count?") Social studies teachers see good reason to emphasize causality, historiography, and an understanding of citizenship and freedom. But in the pursuit of our unique contributions, too often we have lost sight of our students and one another. As a result, in many classrooms, English and social studies are taught not as humanistic disciplines dealing with man, but as inert facts focusing on things. Whether we judge by the quality of literature we have educated our students to purchase, or by the level of participation and understanding of governmental elections, we claim spectacular victories.

Consciously or unconsciously we have allowed ourselves to become, and allowed the educational system to make us, predictable. We are more addicted to regularity than variety. Author James Hilton diagnosed the disease with surgeon-like precision in his famous character, Mr. Chips:

> He had begun to sink into that creeping dry rot of pedogogy which is the worst and ultimate pitfall of the profession; giving the same lesson year after year, he had found a groove into which the other affairs of his life adjusted themselves with insidious ease. He worked well; he was conscientious; he was a fixture that gave service, satisfaction, confidence, everything except inspiration.

But then, as you know, he changed. He met another human being who helped him gain a wider vision concerning the possibilities of his students and his subject. Similarly, in schools where teachers of English and social studies combine their talents and their classes, they discover new dimensions to teaching. Despite the logic of mathematics, the sum of the two classes together becomes greater than its separate parts.

Exciting consequences can be anticipated when our odd couple become natural partners. No matter what the format used in devising a multidisciplinary humanities program of studies—central themes, concepts, chronology, aesthetics, epochs, great cities, values—the English and social studies teachers will be exploring a new teaching design. The approach will be less the mastery of the body of knowledge and more a way of thinking and being. In schools where English and social studies are articulated and integrated in a humanistic framework, students are given opportunities, when discussing great ideas, to choose not only between good and bad but between good and good. Facts, like the scaffolding of a building, become important only in relation to a larger structure. Questions such as the following are raised: How can we balance the rights of the individual with the rights of the group? How truthful is truth? Compare Aristotle's definition of tragedy with Arthur Miller's in *Death of a Salesman*.

Always, successful humanities courses emphasize values. They offer students opportunities to gain a sense of understanding about themselves, to develop a personal gyroscope when making judgments and taking action. "Who am I?" "What is the meaning of life?" "Where have I come from?" "Where am I going?" "In what do I believe?" "Why?" are the underlying questions that should be asked no matter what the curricula guidelines. The literature and events of the past will then be examined from this personal perspective.

Many teachers enjoy the humanistic approach to the study of English and social studies because it breaks the traditional lockstep of an overstuffed curriculum. That our courses are overstuffed is self-evident. World history courses, which in one year jump from the Neanderthals to Nixon and similar courses in world literature are reminiscent of the typical ten day tourist trip through twenty European capitals. The passengers have time only to grab the baggage, gulp down the strange food, and gape at strange places. They taste everything; they feel and understand nothing. Similarly, our students pass through our survey courses; we cover everything, they remember nothing.

Frank Marcus tells the story of what happened when Harold Pinter agreed to write a special one-hour television play. After the play was read aloud for the first time everyone agreed that the script was excellent. But when the producer asked for the time score, he was informed that the scheduled hour drama lasted exactly twenty-eight minutes and thirty-four seconds. An awkward silence followed. Looking about, Mr. Pinter said, "You see, there are quite a lot of full pauses. . . ."

In school we abhor a pause, whether full or empty. It is almost as though we are certain the students will get into some mischief if we give them time to wonder, to think. (I fear that too many Boards of Education and school administrators react the same way about free time for teachers.) And so we move along much too rapidly, much too perfunctorily, and like an iceberg, reveal far too little of the whole. The ripples of meaning, the reverberations from full pauses are drowned. To paraphrase Edna St. Vincent Millay:

> The teacher and the taught, rush from class to class and have no time to think.

Because the humanities program is still not preordained, the teachers of English and social studies can determine for themselves their goals and direction. In the process of deciding, the teachers have to see where the disciplines can best be blended and where they should stand apart. And in the process both teachers gain fresh perspectives and insights. Intellectual batteries are recharged. For many teachers an excitement comparable to the first year of teaching is rekindled.

Recently the social studies teacher in our school exchanged ideas with students in a humanities seminar on Camus' *The Plague*. He was exhilerated. "When I get out of my discipline," he confessed, "I become less concerned about coverage. I am more willing to get at the heart of things and even get off the topic if something more stimulating is on the floor for discussion." A student in this humanities program has observed: "For the first time I'm in a class where the teacher does not have all the answers." And then she added, "And neither have I."

From a psychological perspective, a good teacher becomes an even better teacher when what he is doing with students is shared by a colleague. The thought processes become more acute, the questions are phrased with more precision, the knowledge that we should argue less and listen more somehow is more easily remembered. When both English and social studies teachers participate in a discussion, and, by chance or by design, take opposing sides, the excitement and stimulation for students is correspondingly increased. And if the students are encouraged to add their own contradictory ideas, the end of the session will be greeted with groans.

Not for a moment am I suggesting that the humanities is strictly the province of the English and social studies disciplines. At Hunter our teaching team for the humanities curriculum, meeting approximately three hours each day, includes a teacher of drama, music, dance, and art as well as English and social studies. Learning takes on a new vigor when the art teacher, for example, shows Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in conjunction with the English teacher's discussion of Walter Pater's poem describing the Mona Lisa. Of course the English teacher could show the slide herself. But a new voice, a new thought a different perspective in the way a subject is studied provides students with fresh incentives to become interested.

Our schools have much to learn from the world of films as we move toward a multidisciplinary curriculum. Films combine music, art, and drama as well as visual history and literature with motion picture technology, to create emotional and mind-shaking experiences. The better television directors follow a comparable procedure. We can simulate an equally exciting situation in school by combining the disciplines and appealing to the student's senses as well as his mind.

What conventional wisdom decreed that English classes in many schools should discuss Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* or *Macbeth* in the eleventh grade when the eleventh grade social studies courses are deep in the heart of American history is a question I have never resolved. Other schools have the ninth grade social studies classes concentrating on European history when the ninth grade English classes deal with American literature. Without violating the integrity of their respective disciplines, English and social studies teachers should find it possible to develop more coordinated, more interrelated courses that we have today.

I favor humanities programs where the focus is on students in the room, not on material to be mastered. In the humanities we look at man and at ourselves through our literature, history, religion, and arts. These disciplines no longer become ends in themselves. And more than any other courses no grades are required as weapons to compel compliance with requirements. Students will read assignments, prepare talks, do surveys and examine the ideas of others because they see purpose in doing so. They recognize that in the process they are also examining and understanding themselves. Interestingly, nongraded humanities courses for the non-college bound, are often more successful than humanities courses designed for those with collegiate ambitious who have been brainwashed to work solely for high marks and college admission. Formal education is centered in the curriculum and its success is measured by grades. Informal education is centered in what the student finds important and its success is never measured. It is felt and held by the student all his life.

Fortunately, no miracle of money or administrative Houdinis are required if teachers wish to organize a humanities program. By scheduling the English and social studies teachers to meet the same students on two consecutive periods, a back-to-back humanities course could be organized which would cost the school system not one additional penny in taxes. However, the time for two teachers to meet and plan the programs of studies must be provided. Humanities courses that are summarily thrown together will soon fall apart. In schools where teachers are regularly assigned five daily teaching periods plus a study hall and a homeroom, judicious scheduling can again keep the budget balanced. Study halls could be combined, better still, eliminated, and the students reassigned to more meaningful classes. Or students in the humanities course could meet for less than five consecutive days each week. Giving students independent study opportunities away from the constant supervision of teachers throughout the school day makes excellent educational sense. It also provides time for the teaching team to meet. Sometimes, to launch

a humanities course, teachers have found or made time during lunch or school until the administration was willing to schedule planning periods as part of the faculty assignment.

Even when the administration is uncooperative or unimaginative, teachers can initiate a multidisciplinary humanities program. An Englsih and social studies teacher meeting with the same students in two separate periods or with different students during the same period can exchange classes or dovetail their courses of study so as to highlight and integrate the two disciplines. Selection of books, themes, projects, papers and trips could all be coordinated. The belief that curriculum reform is entirely dependent on administrative leadership is simply a myth. Most administrators are too concerned with the daily routines of school life to take any major initiative for curriculum change.

Administrators, of course, make marvelous scapegoats. We can explain away our own inaction by pointing the accusing finger at the school administrator and thereby absolve ourselves of all guilt feelings. I am in full sympathy with the teachers who have been frustrated and rebuffed in schools where the principal or superintendent, out of fear or stubborness, refuses to listen. Sometimes, however, we need to look in the mirror to see the accomplices.

Constantine Cavafy's brilliant poem, "Expecting The Barbarians," deals with the ancient Greek world. And in the humanistic tradition, it sheds light on our own school situation today:

> What are we waiting for, assembled in the public square?
>
> The barbarians are to arrive today.
>
> Why such inaction in the Senate?
> Why do the Senators sit and pass no laws?
>
> Because the barbarians are to arrive today.
> What further laws can the Senators pass?
> When the barbarians come they will make the laws.
>
> Why did our emperor wake up so early,
> and sit at the principal gate of the city,
> on the throne, in state, wearing his crown?
>
> Because the barbarians are to arrive today.
> And the emperor waits to receive
> their chief. Indeed he has prepared
> to give him a scroll. Therein he engraved
> many titles and names of honor.
>
> Why have our two consults and the praetors come out
> today in their red, embroidered togas;
> why do they wear amethyst-studded bracelets,
> and rings with brilliant glittering emeralds;
> why are they carrying costly canes today,
> superbly carved with silver and gold?

Because the barbarians are to arrive today,
and such things dazzle the barbarians.

Why don't the worthy orators come as usual
to make their speeches, to have their say?
Because the barbarians are to arrive today;
and they get bored with eloquence and orations.

Why this sudden unrest and confusion?
(How solemn their faces have become.)
Why are the streets and squares clearly quickly,
and all return to their homes, so deep in thought?

Because night is here but the barbarians have not come.
Some people arrived from the frontiers,
and they said that there are no longer any barbarians.

And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?
Those people were a kind of solution.

I trust you will not tell my administrative colleagues that I have equated them with barbarians. To coin a phrase, some of my best friends are school administrators. Nor am I necessarily suggesting that school teachers in the United States resemble Constantine Covafy's Greek Senators. But it is possible to make changes in the school curriculum without waiting for approval from the harried administrator.

Examine for a moment the tremendous flexibility that is gained in the double period humanities program. A film can be seen and discussed in a single day. A guest speaker can address two classes at the same time. One teacher can meet with both classes for the double period while the second teacher meets with individual students in preceptorial sessions. On the second day the procedure could be reversed; or the students could meet with both teachers in a large group session for part of the double period and then re-form into small discussion groups. A trip to a nearby museum could be arranged without removing students from other classes. In short, the nature of the work determines the organizational pattern of the class each day and not the other way around.

Two notes of caution: interlacing English and social studies in a humanities course should not be confused with the core curriculum. Nor can a school system assume that all English and social studies teachers are ready, willing, and able to work together in a cooperative arrangement. The core curriculum organizes two or more subjects around a number of central themes. In developing the theme of conservation, for example, the core teacher uses selected literary works, poems, stories, and drama as well as historical events and even related music and painting. But a single teacher is in charge of the entire class. Unfortunately, the age of specialization has made few undergraduate or graduate education majors into renaissance figures. The strengths and weaknesses of the core teacher's background determines the depth or shallowness in the way a theme is treated. Thus an English teacher generally devotes more time to literature and short-changes the history curriculum.

The experience of teachers with the core curriculum reminds me of that hoary Mutt and Jeff comic strip in which restuarant keeper Mutt advertises a fifty fifty horse and rabbit stew. Jeff, his customer, complains that the stew has no taste of rabbit. "How did you make this fifty fifty horse and rabbit stew?" he demands. "Simple," replies Mutt, "I used half a rabbit and half a horse."

The second caution, the inadvisability of *forcing* English and social studies teachers to work together, cannot be overstated. Some teachers are constitutionally unable to share the blackboard with colleagues. Often they are dynamic individuals with personalities so strong that they find subverting their ideas to those of a fellow teacher in an impossible assignment. These people function best when functioning alone with students. Sometimes a teacher is too shy, too irritable, or too opinionated to welcome colleague contact every day with the same students. Sometimes a teacher is not sufficiently confident of her ability because she lacks teaching experience. The question, however, is not a matter of confidence, but whether the teachers are compatible, whether they are in general agreement on the goals of the course and the best ways to work with students. Sometimes we have adults in the classroom who should have been removed from both students and teachers a long time ago. A textbook author has a prize letter from such a person who wrote, "Please take question two on page 97 out of your next edition. Every time we get to it, it only leads to discussion."

Never underestimate the crucial importance of the faculty in developing a humanities program—or anything else. Far more humanities courses have floundered and failed because the teachers on the team were mismatched, than from an inadequate curriculum. A high intelligence quotient is not the most important attribute required. In a humanities faculty the human personality comes first—a feeling for people, a sense of compassion and moral integrity. Second is effectiveness, the ability to master and to teach related material. Of course, a humanities teacher is not at a disadvantage if he has intelligence to go along with his personality and effectiveness.

One point is certain: teachers in humanities programs cannot be placed or replaced like interchangeable parts of an automobile. Nor do mediocre, insensitive teachers experience a metamorphosis when they are dumped into a humanities program. If we wish to help our students become more human, we must have a great deal of humanity in ourselves.

FOCUS TOPIC FOR SPRING ISSUE: *Cultural Pluralism*

A Current Bibliography on High School Phase-Elective English Programs

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